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AUTHOR Peterson, Marvin W.
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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the void in the literature on the methodology of institutional research and examines the complex process of interaction that occurs when an institution engages a faculty member or academic unit to assume primary responsibility for conducting a research project on behalf of the institution. A case study of a study conducted by a group of academic researchers under an agreement with the institutional research office is presented to illustrate: (1) issues resulting from conflicting perspectives of institutional management and academic research; (2) resolution of these issues; (3) academic and institutional benefits; and (4) critical lessons which help to assure that such collaborative efforts work. Issues raised include insufficient educational background of non-instructional staff, the importance of gaining executive and administrative support, reactions of various staff members to data utilization, and the content of the summary report. Benefits of this cooperative approach for both academic researchers and the institution are identified. Discussion of critical lessons learned focuses on the academic significance of the project, selection of faculty members with an academic interest, academic and managerial benefits, development of a written agreement, establishment of guidelines for publication privileges and data controls, openness to change, unresolved issues, use of conflict as creative opportunity, estimation of time and effort requirements; and importance of mutual respect and sharing credit. Appendices list project reports and presentations. (Contains 15 references.) (CK)

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ENHANCING FACULTY INVOLVEMENT IN INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH A COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH STRATEGY

by

Professor Marvin W. Peterson

Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education
University of Michigan

Presented at AIR National Forum
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Jean Endo
Editor
AIR Forum Publications

ABSTRACT

Engaging faculty as researchers to undertake a study of a major institutional issue is an infrequently used opportunity to expand the scope of institutional research and one which highlights the differing perspectives of institutional and academic researchers. A collaborative action research paradigm or strategy employed by both is a useful way to address conflicts between these two perspectives and to enhance an effort that is mutually beneficial to both the institutional and faculty researchers. A case study of a major year and a half research study conducted by a group of academic researchers under an agreement with the institutional research office identifies the issues that arise, the mutual benefits, and the critical lessons of a collaborative action research strategy.

FACULTY INVOLVEMENT IN INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

The dilemma of the institutional researcher caught between the differing perspective of faculty and administrators - especially executive officers - is not new. Even though the traditional debates about the role and independence of institutional research has largely been resolved in favor of its managerial role and institutional focus (Saupe, 1990), the relationship of institutional research to the faculty remains a critical one. In a college or a university whose central function is education or scholarship and in which faculty constitute the major human resource for achieving those functions, almost all institutional research activity has some potential influence on them and/or the teaching, research, or service functions. Maintaining faculty respect for the credibility of institutional studies, their belief in the legitimacy of the institutional research staff and function, and their willingness to accept and use the information generated is key to the long term contribution of institutional research work. Involving faculty in the institutional research process is one major way of maintaining their respect, legitimate support for and acceptance of institutional research as well as improving the utilization of I.R. studies. Faculty modes of involvement can vary substantially from participation as:

- subjects of institutional research, often reluctant or resistent if it infringes on their academic effort or if they view it as poorly designed.
- advisors to various I.R. projects on which they serve to represent a constituency, to provide expert advice or even be co-opted.
- interpreters of scholarly work and research from their own field to provide either potential new revelations to the I.R. office and administration or to contributing to the garbage can of ways of examining a problem or issue.
- members of a formal research policy group which guides or oversees academically focused institutional research and evaluation projects often done begrudgingly as a sense of obligation or as a responsible citizen.
- researchers conducting special studies for the institution - an opportunity which is more often avoided than seen as an opportunity.

Regardless of their role, faculty are widely sought in studies of faculty behavior and performance, program or curriculum review and evaluation, institutional self study and accreditation, student assessment, and teaching and learning issues. However, engaging faculty in the last mode, as researchers who conduct special studies of major institutional significance, is infrequent. The nature of the relationship between the institutional research office and the faculty members conducting such studies is not well documented in the literature. While institutional and academic researchers may share many common concerns for conducting sound research, their differing academic and managerial perspectives may be substantial. Yet this mode of faculty involvement represents an important opportunity for the institution and the institutional research officer with limited resources to benefit from the conceptual and methodological expertise of its faculty, and for faculty to engage in research which may be both academically interesting and institutionally useful.

PROBLEM AND PURPOSE:
THE FACULTY DIRECTED I.R. PROJECT

This paper focused on this void in the literature on the methodology of institutional research and examines the complex process of interaction that occurs when an institution, usually through its institutional research office, engages a faculty member or academic unit to assume primary responsibility for conducting a research project on behalf of the institution. Such instances may involve a project which is beyond the capacity of the institution's I.R. office to conduct, is too sensitive to be conducted by an administratively affiliated unit, or utilizes specialized expertise of a campus academic unit.

The following case study uses a collaborative action research paradigm to examine an effort in which a university research project was conducted by an academic research group with oversight by a university management group co-

chaired by the university's director of academic planning and analysis. While the primary purpose of this case study is to examine a collaborative action research project, it has four major objectives. Those are to examine and identify: 1) the issues raised when differing and often conflicting perspectives of institutional management and academic research emerge, 2) how those issues are addressed in a collaborative action research paradigm, 3) the academic and institutional benefits, and 4) the critical lessons which help to assure that such collaborative efforts work.

ORGANIZING FRAMEWORK: COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH BRIDGING INSTITUTIONAL AND ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Figure I portrays the conceptual framework which guided the case study of this research project and addresses the four primary objectives.

[Insert Figure 1]

Two broad research approaches, "academic or scholarly" and "management or institutional research", are contrasted to identify potential conflicts or issues when faculty conduct an institutional research study. A third approach, "collaborative action research", used by the participants in this case study, addresses those issues. The "benefits" of such an approach and the "lessons" to be learned are the examined.

While institutional research literature speaks to issues of involving faculty in various roles to enhance its quality, legitimacy or dissemination (e.g. Ewell, 1989), this author found no explicit literature on faculty directed major projects. There is also an extensive literature on academic or scholarly approaches to research, on policy or managerment oriented research and on collaborative or participatory action research.

The academic or scholarly approach to research which faculty often adopt may reflect either a scientific or humanistic paradigm (Longstreet, 1982) in which

a problem of scholarly interest is researched using the canons of good academic research in his or her discipline of field and usually with little or no direct intent to shape decisions or subsequent action. Although scientific or humanistic approaches differ, they share common concerns about the research process and are reflected in the most academic research methods courses and texts (e.g. Jockell, E. and Asher, J.W., 1995). Policy or management oriented institutional research (Saupe, 1990; Gill, J. and Saunders, L., 1992), on the other hand, is conducted by researchers who are focused on explicit contextual problems or issues often closely tied to the act of policy or decision making. A third approach to research, reflected by the collaborative or participatory action research paradigm, suggests an approach which merges a concern for action and involves both research and subject as collaborators in the entire research process. This approach grows out of the work of Kurt Lewin (1946, 1952) on action research which used steps of "planning, acting, observing, and evaluating" to focus on linking research and action (Hakel, 1982; Longsteet, 1982) and on planned change which linked change agent and subject and yielded the rich tradition of collaborative or participating action research (Argyrus, 1993; Argyrus and Seton, 1989; McTaggart, 1991; Smulyan, 1987-88; Whyte et al, 1989). Another central concern of collaborative action research is engaging in research that links the academic and managerial concerns for theory and action (Lawler, 1995). This approach has been widely adopted in education (McLean, 1995) including higher education (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992).

There are many variations within and a great deal of overlap among these three research approaches or paradigms. All share a common concern for reliability (accuracy and reproducibility) and validity (consistent or objective meaning) of concepts or variables and the data chosen to represent them. Based on the literature, the academic or scholarly approach and the

management oriented institutional research approach are contrasted on some key characterisitcs of the research process (See Table 1) to identify potential conflicts or issues which are addressed by a collaborative action research approach.

[Insert Table 1]

Drawing on their definition, it is clear the "primary purpose" of these three research approaches varies. Academic or scholarly research usually intends to uncover new concepts or theories or to testing existing ones in order to improve our understanding of the phenomenon under study. Management oriented research is more concerned with defining and clarifying problems, providing sound data for decision making, or evaluating what works. Academic research focuses on understanding the phenomenon under examination for its own inherent value and to enlighten the researcher. Managerial research focuses on informing and serving the needs of key constituents - usually policy or decision makers - about current conditions, plausible courses of action and likely outcomes. Collaborative action research, however, recognizes the validity of both perspectives and focuses on the interplay of the academic researchers interest and managerial needs of the institutional or the institutional policy or decision maker and uses a collaborative partnership of researchers, administrative sponsors and the subject of research (if different). The goal is to enhance both action and conceptual or theoretical understanding. The research process is seen as an educational opportunity for organizational learning for researcher, sponsor, and subject.

The "primary audience" for most faculty are academic researchers in their own disciplinary or professional scholarly community about their conceptual findings. Managerment oriented research is focused more on informing policy or decision makers or key constituent groups about the problem under focus and

likely action alternatives. Collaborative action research requires a mutual recognition of the faculty researcher and management representative of each other's audience and a willingness to prepare appropriate and quite different reports for each.

In the academic research approach the "source of the research problem " of interest to the faculty researcher is likely to be the faculty member's research interest or the knowledge gaps related to the topic under focus. In the management oriented approach, the problem is most likely to be determined by the institutional situation and need or priority of key policy and decision makers. Collaborative action research attempts to look for links between conceptual issues and the institutional problem or to involve faculty as researchers whose conceptual interest overlap with the issue.

The "time frame" for conducting a research project also represents a contrast. Faculty as researchers often see the time frame of a research project in terms of their own workload demands, the size or complexity of the project, and how long it takes to do a quality job. The management-oriented perspective, however, is often determined by an institutional decision cycle or by the key managers sense of urgency. In a collaborative action mode there is an attempt at accommodation; however, the institutional need or demand would have to dominate. Since academic research is often more complex analytically, a normal accommodation would be to collect data and do the administrative report first and then proceed with an academic analysis and report at the faculty members pace.

The "role of the researcher" in the academic approach almost always involves the researcher as a neutral or detached expert who designs and carries out the research. The management-oriented researcher is more likely to actively engage the key constituents or subjects and to play a variety of roles - researcher, analyst, consultant, interpreter, etc. The collaborative action model

clearly requires the researcher to intensively involve the subject or administrative sponsor in all aspects of the research. This, of course, means the faculty researcher needs to b able to play other roles than just researcher and to be a teacher, a partner and occasionally even a change agent.

Implicit in the discussion of researcher role in the characteristic of "researcher control." In the academic approach, the faculty researcher retains essential control of the design and conduct of the study although it is more likely a field based study rather than an experimental one. In the management approach, most of the control of the research design is determined by the institutional situation - the interest of constituents, the nature of the setting and problem and the interests of the key managers. In the collaborative action model the situation would still be the primary source of control; however, a good field researcher would still be able to influence the research design and conduct of the research.

In the "design" of a study the academic researcher would be more inclined to develop a conceptual model or theory-based design to field test (unless it was exploratory and then the interest would be in developing concepts or a theory). The managerment oriented approach relies far more heavily on the situation (problem, constituents, policy makers etc.) to determine the nature of the design and data collection. While it may require some creative effort on the part of the faculty researcher, the collaborative action mode would allow both perspectives to co-exist. For example, the administrative interest might be primarily in problem definition, but the faculty researcher might still collect additional data to test some conceptual model of the phenomenon.

The "role of subject" in academic research is just that - subject or respondent. This may also be true in a management oriented study. However,

in the collaborative action approach the subject also becomes a key participant, a potential mutual partner in the research.

The "findings" of greatest interest in academic research are the conceptual and theoretical ones that can be translated into a scholarly publication although useful research report might still be expected. The management approach clearly is interested in a well honed study that defines and clarifies the problem under study, lays out alternatives or even includes policy recommendations. The collaborative action approach attempts to accommodate both; however, the management interests may dominate the institutional report while the faculty members will be in an academic product.

"Dissemination", "Interpretation" and "action planning" in the academic approach suggest that the primary interest is in dissemination to academic colleagues and providing a written institutional report with limited responsibility for interpretation and action planning. The management approach, however, focuses dissemination on constituents and key decision makers and gives far greater emphasis to working with them in action planning. In the collaborative model both types of dissemination can be anticipated in a partnership effort - but the emphasis on interpretation would include widespread feedback sessions, and dialogues and action planning with key constituents and subjects. This reflects the planned change influence of organizational development that is a central theme of a collaborative action research approach.

Finally the "source of reward" and focus of "benefits" differ. In the academic approach, the faculty member is more likely to be concerned about his or her own professional benefits that accrue from professional presentations and publications. On the other hand, the management approach is more likely to see constituent acceptance of the study findings, successful implementation efforts, and developing model approaches to the study problem for others to emulate as

the primary reward. The ultimate benefit, of course, is how useful the study is to the institution and/or its key policy or decision makers. The collaborative action approach suggests both types of rewards and benefits could be anticipated from a truly collaborative partnership effort.

It should be apparent from this discussion that the collaborative action approach offers a significant opportunity to enhance the benefits to both the faculty as academic researcher and the management oriented institutional research office and provides a way to link those two often contradictory academic and management perspectives. However, it requires administrators and institutional research directors and faculty participants who are willing to work collaboratively. More importantly, it suggests more overall effort than might be expended on just a faculty run independent academic research project or an internal institutional research study - but it promises benefits to both. Given the paucity of literature on faculty directed institutional research projects, there should also be some lessons to be learned (See Figure 1).

METHODOLOGY

This research involves a case study of a collaborative action research effort at the University of Michigan in which a faculty and graduate student research group undertook a major study of the "Quality Oriented Work Environment of the Non-Instructional Staff" at that institution. The purpose of the case study was: 1) to examine how this project, as a collaborative action research effort, functioned? 2) to see how it dealt with the conflicting views of an academic research team management oriented oversight group?; 3)to identify the benefits from this effort; 4) and to find the lessons which can be learned.

The case study used a participant-observer approach (State, R. 1995). The author, as a faculty co-director of the project, had access to all documents, records, and an event history of the entire project. These data were organized

chronologically to examine the events, issues and actors and how the collaboration in fact worked. The case study was critiqued by members of the management oversight group and other members of the faculty and student research team.

The conceptual framework already discussed has used the literature to show how a collaborative action research approach should address the conflicts and issues between the academic and managerial approach. The benefits examined were primarily tangible results of the effort. The lessons were extracted from the case study. A brief context describes the setting for the research project itself. The case study is then presented in five phases reflecting steps in the research process.

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING

The M-Quality Project

In the late 1980's, the University of Michigan, like other colleges and universities, was concerned about the pressing need to improve the quality of its academic administrative services while trying to contain ever increasing costs. In 1989, the President had commissioned a task force to examine how the University community can continue to carry out its quest for excellence in teaching, research and services when the costs of addressing our aspirations, obligations, and responsibilities as a great university are growing faster than our resources" (M-Quality, Jan. 1994). As a result of that task force, a Design Team of U of M faculty, administrators and staff devised a plan: "M-Quality: Continuous Improvement at the University of Michigan". The M-Quality Plan was a university wide program focused on the non-instructional staff to implement positive workplace change emphasizing continuous quality improvement. The plan (See Figure 2) involved three major initiatives.

Planning for Excellence: leadership activities to clarify, reaffirm, and communicate the mission and vision of the university and to bring policies
and procedures into line with M-Quality principles.

Quality Improvement Teams: to study and improve work processes.

Quality In Daily Activities: empowering all in the university to use information and implement changes in their work.

The M Quality Plan was based on four principles.

Pursuing Continuous Improvement: study of administrative processes; making trial improvements; testing, revising and evaluating them.

Managing By Fact: a distinct effort to gather and analyze relevant facts for decision making.

Respecting People and Ideas: in the workplace.

Satisfying Those We Serve: focusing on the recipients of our work.

[Insert Figure 2]

The organizational structure of the M-Quality effort (see Figure 3) consisted of a University-wide Council for Continuous Improvement with over 40 executive officer, deans and directors of major administrative units; ten person Steering Committee to provide executive policy leadership; and three major committees, the Communication Committee, Evaluation Committee, and Training Design Team to direct those activities. An Executive Advisor, a full time administrator, coordinated the effort.

[Insert Figure 3]

A three year plan to implement M-Quality consisted of a 1991-92 Planning Phase, a 1992-93 Pilot Phase - Year One, and a 1993-94 Pilot Phase - Year Two. During the 1992-93 year the M-Quality Evaluation Team (E.T.) commissioned the development of an evaluation framework, the design of an instrument to assess the non-instructional staff members perception of their work environment and the conduct of a survey. The Work Environment Research

Group (WERG) at the University's Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education (CSHPE) was the group commissioned. The Evaluation Team was a five person group co-chaired by the Director of the Office of Academic Planning and Analysis and the Executive Advisor to the Council for Continuous Quality Improvement. The WERG group was directed by two senior professors who had been involved for two years in studying total quality initiatives in higher education. They were assisted by four doctoral graduate research assistants in CSHPE (and others intermittently). E.T. and WERG are the two focal groups in this case study.

The Study: An Overview

Purpose and Objectives as originally envisioned by the Evaluation Team. The purpose of this effort was to provide the M-Quality program with an ongoing mechanism for assessing the non-instructional work environment of the university along total quality and continuous improvement guidelines. The three primary objectives established for this effort were:

- To develop a framework for examining dimensions of the work environment at the University of Michigan that are conducive to total quality and continuous improvement. In particular, a survey instrument was designed to assess the values, principles, processes, practices, and outcomes related to high quality performance utilizing total quality and continuous improvement dimensions.

- To provide baseline data that identifies the extent to which high quality performance is being achieved at the University Comparable data can be gathered in the future using the same survey instrument to assess improvement and rate of progress.

- To identify areas of strength and issues needing attention within the University work environment and to recommend possible interventions and improvements.

Nature of Study. The study involved the development of an instrument and a survey of all 10,400 non-instructional staff members at the University of Michigan. Staff members were defined as individuals who are permanently

employed by the University but do not hold faculty rank. The survey focused primarily on the staff member's perception of his/her immediate work environment at the University of Michigan. It assessed the extent to which this environment is characterized by certain dimensions of organizational culture and climate that are consistent with total quality and continuous improvement.

Methods. In brief, a review and synthesis of the organizational and higher educational literature's identified major approaches to total quality and continuous improvement, some common content categories of activity, and key dimensions of value, beliefs, processes and practices reflecting an organizational culture and climate for quality and continuous improvement. This provided the basis for developing a conceptual framework for examining staff members' work environment and for developing survey items.

A series of focus groups with diverse university employees added further dimensions and insights to the design of the survey instrument. Pilot testing of the instrument helped refine the survey before the actual instrument was administered. The survey distribution was designed to reach all respondents in their work setting. The survey respondents provided ratings of the extent to which the culture and climate of the immediate work environment is consistent with attributes of quality and continuous improvement. The instrument consisted of 135 items measuring the perceived culture, climate, and outcomes of a quality oriented work environment. A factor analysis of these data resulted in 27 indices which were largely consistent with the dimensions identified in the conceptual framework.

Findings. The key questions lying at the heart of the study are: "What is the University of Michigan non-instructional staff work environment like?" and "Does it reflect a culture and climate supportive of total quality and continuous improvement?" Based on the survey results, the overall perception of the work

environment tended to be relatively favorable. Particular areas of strength related to total quality and continuous improvement in the University are made clear from the findings as are areas needing additional attention. Extensive dissemination of results and use of them in subsequent action planning to improve the work environment has occurred.

THE C.A.R. CASE

We turn now to the case study as a collaborative action research project. It is useful to describe and analyze this research project in five phases:

Initiating The Agreement : Establishing A Collaborative Context

As in most instances on a university campus, the key figures on the Evaluation Team (ET) and the co-directors of the Work Environment Research Group (WERG) were known to each other. In their decision to commission this study, the ET was aware that this was a substantial project which the Office of Academic Planning and Analysis could not handle with current staffing, that the development and design activity would benefit by some expertise in total quality and continuous improvement as well as in survey research, and that their own involvement in the M-Quality process made if difficult to take on the responsibility of developing an approach that might be used as an evaluative mechanism in the future.

In seeking other groups to conduct this project, they approached non-university consultants as well as the WERG group. After initial informal discussions, there was a consensus that the WERG group represented the appropriate expertise, had prior experience working on sensitive managerial issues, and probably would be less expensive than an external consultant (or at least the funds would go to providing some graduate student support as well as faculty salary support).

The WERG group, on the other hand, saw an opportunity to work on a university management project that had a conceptual challenge (define dimensions of a quality oriented work environment), that was focused on an area (total quality and continuous improvement) in which they had a scholarly interest, and in which they were already developing research plans. While their previous activity had been primarily focused on the academic and faculty environment, they recognized that the major activity in total quality and continuous improvement in college and universities was in the non-instructional arena.

Given the commonalty of interests, the co-directors of WERG developed a brief five page proposal and a budget for developing an instrument and conducting a survey for responding to the E.T.'s purpose and three broad objectives (the E.T. had not issued a formal R.F.P.). It should also be noted that both the Director of OAPA and the co-directors of the WERG group had prior experience with projects in which a faculty member undertook a significant management oriented research project although they had not worked with each other. Both, however, were intuitively if not explicitly aware of some of the conflicts of an academic and management oriented research approach. The seven elements of the WERG proposal are important to review since they provide a framework for this collaborative action research approach.

"Purpose". Although the four purposes of the proposal responded to the three E.T. objectives, they are more explicit in identifying key developmental, research, and analytic reporting responsibilities. They are important to note since, despite their specificity, some modifications and modest misunderstandings would emerge later.

- develop an analytic model for examining and an instrument for measuring the quality processes, practice, and culture among non academic staff.
- conduct an initial sample survey of the about 10,000 non-academic staff on the Ann Arbor campus (excluding the medical staff).

- undertake a descriptive summary of the results, reliability testing of the instrument, data reduction, index construction, and relational analysis.

- produce a descriptive profile of the results, an analytic report of the results, and a revised instrument for future use.

Work Plan. Seven work phases or activities are defined. The important characteristic is their anticipation of a collaborative working relationship between E.T. and WERG and support by the Office of Academic Planning and Analysis (OAPA). The parentheses at each phase reflect agreements in discussions between E.T. co-chair and WERG co-directors.

1. Development of a framework and key dimensions for assessing a quality oriented work environment that reflect both literature based and M-Quality based dimensions. Draft of a preliminary instrument reflecting these dimensions. (E.T. co-chairs to provide M-Quality reports, documents, and lists of personnel).

2. Review of preliminary dimensions with both E.T. and Professional and Administrative (P&A) staff groups. Review draft instruments with E.T. and pilot with various P&A groups. Develop a sampling plan. (The OAPA office agreed to assist in identifying P&A groups and providing data on them for developing a sampling plan).

3. Meetings of WERG members with various P&A representatives to explain and build support for the survey. Clarify survey endorsement, distribution, return and follow up procedures to encourage participation and protect anonymity. (E.T. co chairs agree to facilitate access to P&A leaders, obtain procedural clearances).

4. Code and develop data base - well documented for future use.

5. Provide descriptive profile of responses by broad response groups and a brief preliminary report for E.T., Quality Council and Executive Offices Review. (E.T. co-chairs agreed to assist in getting feedback from these groups).

6. Reliability and validity analysis of items, data reduction and index creation, and analysis of indices by response group. (OAPA director agreed to review with key research staff).

7. Final report and revision of instrument, based on reliability testing, for future use. (E.T. agreed to provide thorough review and critique to early drafts).

Three important things should be noted in these phases. First, they reflect a pattern of collaboration between E.T. and WERG in clarifying the initial work plan. Second, they spell out, not only, an oversight review role for E.T., but an active role, primarily through OAPA, in assisting the WERG team at various points. Third, the work plan fails to discuss dissemination activities. This would become a conflict at the end of the project especially in light of minimal budgeting by the co-directors of their time and extensive expectations of the E.T. co-chairs and other executive officers.

"Products". Four products were identified: 1) a preliminary instrument, 2) a descriptive profile and summary report, 3) a final analytic report, and 4) a revised instrument. While there was little discussion of these products, the later active interest in the content and style of the reports could have benefited by greater discussion. Both controversies and delays would occur in producing the final report and in agreeing on what a "summary report" would be.

"Project staff". Defines the qualifications and interest of WERG co-directors and their relationship to and responsibility for the graduate assistants on the project. The latter element was particularly critical in light of the very limited time budgeted for the co-directors (to keep costs down of E.T. request) and the E.T.'s concern about the experience and maturity of graduate students in potentially dealing with executive officers, leaders of sensitive P&A staff groups (unions), and complex demands of a major research project with perhaps minimal staff support. Fortunately the WERG team benefited from some very able advanced doctoral students who, in fact, carried a great deal of the responsibility not just for the project but for dissemination activity not included in the project proposal.

"Budget and Space". Mostly salary support for WERG co-directors, graduate assistants, and a part time secretary and basic direct expenses

associated with a survey project. The underfunding of the co-directors and the extensive dissemination demands was an oversight that needs to be addressed in collaborative action research (an oversight the co-directors acknowledge and take responsibility for). Some late changes in survey strategy and the addition of some content analysis activity would raise budgetary concern but were amicably settled by adjustments during the project - reflecting the E.T.'s awareness of a tight budget and their own commitment to having a well done project.

"Relationship". A critical paragraph expressing the WERG co-director's concern for having a "critical review and advisory team" throughout the project. The E.T. essentially agreed to be this group and possessed substantial expertise in their knowledge of quality and continuous improvement (perhaps a gauge of the M-Quality experience), capability in survey research, their access to key individuals and university data bases, and their critical report writing skills (a E.T. perspective). It is again important to note the two E.T. co-directors agreed to play a greater "critical review and advisory" role and, in fact, provided staff assistance at key functions.

"Understandings". Four issues emerged in preliminary discussions and were included in the proposal agreed to by the E.T.

1. This was not to be an <u>evaluation</u> project but a benchmarking for future reference. (This, along with the concern for anonymity, led to an agreement that analysis in this effort would not go below breakdowns below vice-presidential or functional areas and only across the broader P&A staffing categories. In fact, they would not even be presented comparatively in descriptive profiles).

2. The E.T. retained the right to use the instrument for their own future research.

3. Items or sections could be used for WERG the interests in studying faculty work environments if they were appropriate.

4. The E.T. has permission to use the data for professional research presentations and publications.

These understandings reflect university concerns about how the project data will be used internally and the E.T. teams interest in being able to further their own academic and scholarly interests.

"Time Table." A projected time table anticipated a twelve month project (June 1, 1993 - May 31, 1994). In fact the Final Technical report was not completed until September 1, 1994 - a three month delay. While it was exasperating, it was largely due to a change in survey strategy (sample to population), extensive redrafting based on ET reviews and concerns especially at the final report stage, the addition of a content analysis of open-ended responses, (and erratic summer schedule of the co-directors). Of greater concern was the almost nine month delay in a summary report to the community (discussed later).

"Special liaison". An issue not discussed in the proposal, but agreed to by the E.T. leaders and WERG co-directors at the beginning of the project was the appointment of two official liaisons between E.T. and WERG. One member of the OAPA staff (on behalf of the director as E.T. co-leader) and one graduate student from the WERG team were each named as liaison to the other group and attended all meetings where this project was discussed. This insured the maintenance of open communication between the WERG and ET groups (and especially their leaders) and helped identify and anticipate issues before they become problems or hindered or delayed progress at key times.

"Summary". It is clear that there was a strong willingness to work in a collaborative way by the E.T. and WERG leadership. The initial conversation, the proposal, and the follow up discussion suggest that many of the research characteristics on which academic researchers and managerial researchers differ were being approached in a collaborative way. Differences in primary purposes of the research, audiences to be addressed, the source of insight to the research

problem, the time frame, researcher (WERG) role and control, research design, subject or management representation (ET), nature of important findings, areas of dissemination, and the source of rewards were all addressed explicitly or implicitly. While these all reflect a basis for action as well, two characteristics of the research process not addressed at this initial stage were dissemination and interpretation and action planning. These would emerge as issues to be resolved later in the project.

Conceptual and Methodological Design: Conflicts and Compromises.

Following the negotiation of an agreement, the WERG group began the task of developing a conceptual framework for and dimensions of a quality and continuous improvement in the work environment. Building on the WERG team's prior literature reviews of this area, they identified a series of dimensions. The E.T. leaders provided M-Quality documents which were incorporated but overlapped with ideas already identified in the literature.

When these conceptual dimensions were shared with members of the E.T. for review in the Fall of 1993, the first conflict emerged around a proposed dimension focused on "Fairness and Objectivity of Rewards" - an obvious dimension to those familiar with the quality and improvement literature. However, executive officers on the Quality Council expressed serious reservations about a dimension that would include questions related to salary and compensation issues. In the previous several months, two things had occurred to make salaries a very sensitive issue on campus. The Regents, in an attempt to put executive officer salaries on par with those in "comparable" research universities, had begun a three year plan to substantially increase their annual base salaries in addition to any merit increases. At the same time the release of annual salary increase data had led to newspaper articles about all high level administrators, not just executive officers, receiving salary increases

well above average of faculty and other non-instructional groups. Needless to say there was a great deal of concern about the results of such a dimension in the questionnaire. The compromise was largely resolved for the management point of view. The dimension was deleted. The researchers eventually included only a couple of vague items about "rewards" and resolved to include the dimension in future research.

As the WERG group began drafting items, they were greatly assisted by focus group discussions with diverse groups coordinated by members of the E.T. leadership. However in pilot testing draft instruments a new reality emerged. Unlike instructional staff, many non-instructional staff lack substantial educational background and literacy skills. This required redrafting items but, more importantly, became a way of involving the subject in the instrument design. In addition to simplifying the items, leaders of various P&A groups became involved in suggesting ways to deal with the issue (supply readers, give extra time, etc.).

Before establishing a sampling design for the survey, the M-Quality Council became concerned that sampling was not consistent with the philosophy of M-Quality - "valuing all workers". So they decided they wanted a population survey of over 10,400 employers rather than a sample survey of perhaps 2,500. While the WERG group was sympathetic and not in philosophical disagreement, the change greatly increased their workload and projected expenses. The compromise agreed to was some adjustment in the budget and the agreement by the OAPA director to provide more assistance in the questionnaire distribution.
Building Support and Insuring Involvement: Constituents and Controversy.

One of the major arguments for a collaboration and an action orientation in research is that it enhances support for and insures involvement of the subject population. Despite the awareness and concern of both members of the E.T. and WERG group, this research issue became a substantial one.

As soon as the study was announced, several sources of non-instructional staff recalled a work environment survey done over fifteen years ago which had been lengthy, produced only statistical profiles, and was never used. The controversy raised three problems. First, members of both the E.T. and WERG group had to spend considerable time meeting with various P&A group leaders to assure them that this study had a different purpose which was very relevant to current M-Quality efforts and that something would be done with the results besides just publishing a report. Second, the dissemination issue now moved beyond just discussions of the final report. In retrospect, it is now clear that the E.T. began to conceive of the "summary report" as something different from a set of "preliminary profiles and summary report". The WERG group anticipated the latter, a brief report, on the way to a final technical report. The E.T., or at least its leadership, now began to conceive of it as a very polished public relations report to the university community. This issue would not get resolved until the end of the project and required almost six months after the Technical report to produce and distribute. Third, this issue now heightened the E.T.'s interest in <u>action planning</u> - what would occur with the reports to stimulate change. While initial discussions of what might be done began in Fall, 1993, they too would not be resolved until the summer and fall of 1994. While all of the problems raised by this controversy forced both the E.T. and WERG group to focus more on building support and planning for action, they also meant considerably more time and effort - something that was to become a heavy demand on the WERG group and its co-directors.

Another controversial issue was gaining executive and administrative support. While the WERG team had been assured by members of the E.T., that this project had the full support of the M-Quality Council and Executive officers, it became clear in Fall, 1993 that endorsement did not mean full support. At the

urging of the E.T leadership, the WERG co-directors met individually with certain executive officers to explain the study, hear their concerns, and try to accommodate them. Most turned out not to be critical - merely time consuming (and a burden to the E.T. leadership as well). In one particularly sensitive area a human resources director, who felt this project should have been under his direction had to be reasoned with.

As we approached the survey stage, the WERG team received excellent assistance from OAPA staff in setting up procedures for distributing and receiving the survey but faced another controversy. Distributing the survey, it seems would be more difficult than anticipated - particularly since it was a population survey. Many non-instructional staff have no office, phone, or mail box to receive questionnaires. Special arrangements to distribute them at their work places when they arrived at work meant some WERG team members (graduate assistants, of course) had to appear at 6:00 a.m. in the morning to distribute surveys.

The E.T. co-leaders also provided excellent assistance in getting the president to prepare a cover letter to the survey, all executive officers to endorse allowing employees to fill it out on staff time, and arranging for University Record articles to publicize the study and to do a reminder article to staff urging them to "Let Their Voice Be Heard". These efforts, no doubt, assisted greatly in raising response rates which may have been reinforced by the earlier efforts to meet with all concerned executive officers and heads of units.

Analysis and Interpretation: The Meaning and the Message.

As questionnaires returned data was entered and analysis began, the WERG team was freed from controversy and focused on understanding and interpreting the results. One initial realization was that over 50% of the respondents had provided open ended responses to each of two questions

("about your work experience at the U of M" or "about this survey"). Many were quite lengthy. This turned out to be of substantial interest to the ET as well. After a discussion, it was agreed that these responses should be extracted verbatim, a content analysis done, a special report produced, and exemplary comments included in the final Technical Report of the survey itself. Although it was a substantial burden to the WERG group, the ET provided additional funds to hire graduate student assistance to conduct this activity. In retrospect, it provided some useful insight and also made for a much more humane summary report to the university community which incorporated both the findings and exemplary comments.

As the WERG team began producing its initial profiles and shared them with the ET, there was heightened interest and some easing of anticipatory tension - the results were neutral to positive. There was little that was highly negative and differences across functional/vice presidential areas were not substantial. Several issues of meaning and message, however, emerged.

First, one dimension raised eyebrows. The president's office staff (identified as a separate functional area) scored lowest on a couple of indices related to the use of data for decision making. This was in the office of a president who has a tremendous proclivity for devouring data and using computers in his daily activities. Needless to say, it provided a more interesting feedback session with the president.

Second, as the data came back with little to threaten the various executive officers, interest in more detailed breakdowns by employers P&A status, divisional work group, or both began to increase as the concern about dissemination were eased. However, this interest raised concerns about "evaluative" use of the results (which was to be avoided) and "anonymity" if cross tabs were to finely grained. Fortunately, the ET and WERG group had

anticipated this issue and developed a set of "Guidelines for Use of the Data" and "Proposal for Further Analyses". These guidelines set parameters for access to the data (controlled by OAPA who would be responsible for it when the study ended), minimal cell sizes in cross tabs to assure anonymity, and a process for hiring OAPA staff or WERG graduate assistants to do the detailed analysis that was requested by various groups and prepare a summary report for them. These focused analyses also heightened the interest in dissemination and action (discussed in next section).

Third, the drafting of the final report by the WERG team and review by the ET sparked for the first time some of the real issues of meaning and message in the final report and presaged a controversy over preparation of a summary report for the community. The ET leadership had useful comments on the technical and analytic portions of the final report but were most concerned about the limited number of findings and the lack of recommendations for implementation or next steps. The WERG group, relying on the initial proposal agreement and reviewing the rather neutral and undifferentiated patterns of results, was reluctant to make recommendations about "strengths and weaknesses" that were not well supported and did not see themselves as having an active role in implementation and action steps. This led to further discussions between the ET and WERG group which now focused more extensively on action planning. Clearly, the message that something would be done with the study had been given early in the year. The establishment of guidelines for further use in the spring had anticipated the interest in extending dissemination of results, but the roles of both ET and WERG in action planning - what should be done and by whom had not been dealt with adequately (discussed later).

The final issue in relating meaning and message was most seriously addressed in the controversy over the "summary report". During the summer of

1994, as the WERG group was preparing the final technical report, they assumed their responsibility for "descriptive profiles and a summary report" was fulfilled by their initial profile of results for discussion with the ET and Executive Officers and the executive summary in the final technical report. However, it was clear that the ET leadership expected a special well written summary report for university wide release. Both groups, I expect, appreciated the legitimacy of the others perspective but both, as believers in "action" research, recognized the need to provide such a report. The informal compromise was that one of the WERG co-directors agreed to draft a summary report (the other agreed to handle additional dissemination/feedback sessions) and the E.T. co-directors agreed to edit, revise and prepare a high quality report for university wide distribution. In the process of redrafting, changes in wording and format were extensive as both sides struggled to convey the results in interesting yet clear and accurate ways. The net result was that, after numerous drafts and use of special editorial assistance, a summary report of "Survey Results" appeared as a special insert in the University Record in March, 1995.

Implementation and Action: A New Ending

Clearly, the issue of implementation and action planning did not get seriously addressed until late in this project. The neutral and non-threatening results had made executive officers more interested in more fine grained feedback within their areas. The discussion about recommendations for implementation in the final report meant the issue was on the E.T. agenda. The critical treatment of the summary report to the university community during the Fall, 1994 reflected the continuing importance of the study even after the final technical report was completed on September 1, 1994.

The strategy that unfolded incorporated included more detailed analyses, personal dissemination sessions, and intensive action planning feedback

sessions. The personal dissemination effort began prior to the release of the final technical report on September 1, with a series of previews of results and recommendations with the Evaluation Team, the Provost and Chief Financial Officers, and the M-Quality Steering Committee in the summer, 1994. After approval by the Evaluation Team, the final technical report of survey results and the special report of the content analysis of open ended questions were released by the M-Quality Council and Executive Officers on September 1, 1994. The personal dissemination effort continued when the project was featured as the key note address by one of the WERG co-directors at the first M-Quality Exposition - a university wide event in October, 1994.

The action planning focus involved a series of personal feedback sessions with executive officers, presentations to the M-Quality Council, the Academic Performance Group (Deans), and the M-Quality Training and Design Group. These emphasized the participants' use of the data to generate ideas for improving their work environment. Clearly, this added to the burden of both the E.T. leadership and the WERG co-directors. The former identifying, planning, and coordinating feedback sessions. The WERG co-directors being involved in far more dissemination, feedback, and action planning groups than they had anticipated. While this was done somewhat begrudingly by the WERG coordinators because of their time constraints, it was a role they had played in other projects in the past and understood its significance. Several sessions dealing with the entire survey were held during the summer and fall of 1994. However, as interest shifted to analysis of sub units and conducting feedback in areas like Business and Finance, Student Affairs, and the Business School, WERG graduate students and a couple of OAPA staff who had been involved began to assume these burdens. These efforts continued through the spring and summer of 1995.

While the research group that conducted this project has now disbanded, the project itself has not. Dissertations and academic research presentations are continuing. Some groups are still requesting further analysis and feedback from OAPA staff. The units that engaged in the action planning feedback sessions during Fall, 1995 are proceeding with their plans. The research co-directors, encouraged by the executive officers, are exploring comparison surveys at other CIC universities. The instrument, in addition to its likely use for a future U of M survey to assess change, is being used by several other colleges and universities currently. So while the formal project is complete, it may in fact still be alive.

Case Summary

It is clear that both the WERG and ET approached this project in a collaborative fashion beginning with the initial agreement. Despite their experience with and commitment to collaboration, a number of controversies and issues arose which reflect both the differences of an academic research and a managerial research perspective. Yet those were often resolved in a collaborative fashion. Despite the concern of both groups for linking research to action, it is clear that real action planning did not occur until late in the research project

BENEFITS

It is clear that this project resulted in benefits for the academic researchers, the institution and its M-Quality effort, and that there were probably mutual benefits. The tangible institutional benefits are (See Appendix II):

- A final technical report with recommendations which included:
    a. A reliability tested instrument for assessing a quality oriented work environment for non-instructional staff - its largest employee group.
    b. Baseline data on the university's work environment.
    c. An evaluation framework for future use.

- A report of the content analysis of open ended questions
- A summary report of the survey results to the university community.
- Extensive dissemination and emerging action plans (see Appendix III).
- Interest in a future assessment and the capacity to do it within the M-Quality Evaluation Team.

The tangible academic benefits to the faculty and graduate student members of the Work Environment Research Group are also extensive (see Appendix IV):

- A field based, reliability tested instrument for assessing a quality oriented work environment for non-instructional staff for future use.
- A conceptual framework with quantifiable dimensions of a quality oriented work environment for evaluative or causal research.
- Eleven professional and academic research presentations.
- Four dissertations.
- Some research publications in progress.
- A current annotated bibliography on Total Quality Management in Higher Education.
- Active Faculty - Student collaboration. Nine doctoral students have collaborated with the two faculty directors on professional presentations, dissertations or publications in addition to working on the project.
- Future research plans.

Obviously several of these tangible products are mutual benefits. More importantly perhaps are the less tangible mutual benefits. Members of the Evaluation Team and Work Environment Group have had an intensive experience in which they have had an opportunity to learn about quality-oriented work environments and about collaborative action research. Both have shown respect for the others academic or managerial research perspective and integrated both in one effort.

CRITICAL LESSONS

While the initial contrasting characteristics of an academic, management, and collaborative action research perspective (Table 1.) provides guidelines for conducting such a project, it is clear that, even when both parties were committed to a collaborative action approach, issues emerge and there are lessons to be learned. Reflecting on the project, the following seem appropriate for an institutional research officer considering engaging a faculty colleague in a major study or a faculty member considering undertaking such a venture.

- Academic Significance or Project. When considering a major project for engaging a faculty member in a collaborative action mode, give emphasis to projects with potential significance for academics as well as its institutional importance. The developmental aspect of this project made it such.

- Selecting Faculty. Make faculty members inherent or academic interest in the project, capacity to collaborate, and interest in action key criteria in deciding to engage him/her. Clearly, the WERG co-directors' interest motivated their extended involvement.

- Know the Principle Players but Expect Surprises. Clearly although the members of the ET and WERG knew each other and the context well, they could not control the actions of others nor anticipate events that occurred along the way. When surprises arise, it is important to face them collaboratively.

- Seek Both Academic and Managerial Benefits not just Mutual Benefits. While mutual benefits may be substantial, the incentive and reward systems of researchers and managers are different. The opportunity to enhance separate agendas is a strong motive for both sides to become involved and stay involved in a complex or controversial study. This project provided substantial benefits to both parties.

- Develop a Written Agreement. In an institutional setting RFP's are unusual and formal proposals less so. Collaboration, however, can be planned with a carefully constructed agreement that includes things such as: purposes of the project, the roles of key players as collaborators, the work plan for the study, the products to be completed, the principles underlying the study, the post study privileges, and the price of the effort. This one was a useful guide although incomplete on product, and implementation and action issues.

- Establish Guidelines for Publication Privileges and Data Controls. The former is key to the academic researcher, the later to the management interests. These were apparent in this project and have protected both parties.

- Expect Change and be Willing to Renegotiate or Compromise. Few major institutional studies proceed from start to finish without major controversies, changing interests of key constituents, or emerging complications. While most can be accommodated by changes, compromise is often necessary. The issue related to the rewards dimension in the survey and the change from sample to population survey highlight this.

- Issues Resolved are Seldom Resolved. Some questions such as anonymity, data access and use, responsibility for results, etc. often depend on how the project or results emerge as they did in this study. Be prepared to revisit them, even if there were initial agreements (or to have to explain them interminably).

- Use Tension and Conflict as Creative Opportunity. Collaboration is not easy, major studies are complicated, institutions are full of constituencies with differing views, translating research to action will be threatening - tension and conflict are natural in such efforts. They, however, can be used to create new insights, approaches, or interpretations if they are examined openly before rejecting them. The extensive open ended data, early concerns about a prior study, and the controversy the "summary report" all led to positive solutions.

- Anticipate Extended Time and Effort. Despite best planning efforts, optimistic projections of work pace, faculty and administrative pressures to keep prior estimates down (one to get the study, the other to save money), unanticipated changes and complications will almost always get in the way. This project was a clear example.

- Respect Perspectives, Personalities and Positions. When faculty and higher education managers or analysts try to collaborate, there perspectives on issues as well as research are different. They may have unique personalities or styles. Position is often not respected but can be influential. A perspective of tolerance is always useful. The concern about salary, the human resources director's prerogative, and the data on the President's office reflect these concerns.

- Share Credit. While a collaborative project may allow for differing academic and administrative benefits, neither can complete a project without the support of the other. Sharing credit where it is appropriate can ensure both the current collaborative effort and open the doors to a future one. Joint involvement of OAPA - WERG staff and giving credit in professional and administrative settings has been reflected by both E.T. and WERG members.

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Appendix I. STUDY RELATED DOCUMENTS

Background on M-Quality:

1. Presidents Charge to University Task Force on "Costs and Quality". 1989.

2. M-Quality Design Team. M-Quality: Continuous Improvement at the University of Michigan, 1991.

3. M-Quality Training Design Team. Report, 1992.

Project Proposals and Guidelines:

1. Peterson, M. and Cameron, K. "M.-Quality Culture Survey Proposal (With budget and time table)." May 13, 1993.

2. Peterson, M. and Cameron, K. "Proposal for Content Analysis of U of M Work Environment Survey". March, 1994.

3. "Guidelines for Use of Data". March 25, 1994.

4. "Proposal and Guidelines for Dissemination of Further Analyses". March 25, 1994.

Materials Related to Survey Distribution (chronological):

1. "Advance Notice of Survey Distribution". Common memo from all Executive Officers to their own Deans, Directors, and Department Heads. June 11, 1994.

2. Elgass, J.R. "Staff Urged to Participate in Survey on the University's Work Environment". University Record. January 31, 1994.

3. Presidential Cover Letter for Survey Instrument. February 1, l994.

4. Peterson, M. and Cameron, K. "Perceptions of the Work Environment at U of M" ©. Survey Instrument, 1994. Distributed February 1, 1994.

5. "Let Your Voice Be Heard". Follow-up postcard to all survey participants. February 8, 1994.

6. Elgass, J.R. "University Assesses Work Environment" (follow up article to survey distribution). University Record. February 8, 1994.

7. Follow up letter to non-respondents from survey directors, February 18, 1994.

Materials Related to Coding and Analysis:

1. Questionnaire Coding Protocol (Fixed Response Items).

2. Questionnaire Code Book

3. Questionnaire Coding Protocol: Open Ended Data Entry

Appendix II. U of M SURVEY PROJECT REPORTS

Julia, J. Perceptions of the Work Environment of the University of Michigan-Dearborn's Non-Instructional Staff: Final Report. CSHPE/WERG. September 1, 1995.

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Appendix III. MAJOR U OF M SURVEY DISSEMINATION, FEEDBACK, AND PRESENTATION EVENTS

Peterson , M. and Cameron, K. Presentation and Discussion of Results With These Groups:

1. Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer (also co-chairs of M-Quality Council and Steering Committee). June 16, 1994.
2. M-Quality Steering Committee. July 19, 1994.
3. M-Quality Council, Executive Officers, and Directors. September 15, 1994.
4. M-Quality Training and Design Group (K. Cameron only). November, 1994.
5. Academic Program Group (Deans). M. Peterson only. November 14, 1994.
6. Briefing of President and Vice-President for University Relations. November 20, 1995.

Other Presentations:

1. Peterson, M.W. Keynote Address "Staff Perceptions of the Work Environment: Hearing Our Own Voices". First M-Quality Exposition "Creating the Future". October 20, 1994.
2. WERG Display. Second M-Quality Exposition November, 1995.
3. WERG Graduate Research Assistants. Special Seminar for CSHPE Graduate Students. February 6, 1995.

Special Analysis and Dissemination Efforts:

1. Business and Finance Retreat: Special sub analysis of respondents. Presentation and action planning facilitated by Dr. F. Womack, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Office. September, 1994.
2. Business School Quality Council: Special sub analysis of respondents. Presentation by WERG graduate assistants. Action planning facilitation by members of Human Resources Development Staff. March, 1995.
3. Student Affairs Division: Special analysis by WERG and OAPA staff including action planning facilitation. May, 1995.
4. U of M Dearborn: Special survey and action planning facilitation by WERG graduate assistant, J. Julia. Fall, 1995.

Appendix IV. SCHOLARLY AND PROFESSIONAL RESULTS

Research Presentations and/or Forthcoming Publications:

Cohen-Barrett, M.; Vander Putten, J. and Peterson, M.W. "Using Content Analysis to Assess Work Environment". Association for Institutional Research Forum, May, 1995, Boston, MA.

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Peterson, M.W.; Cameron, K.S.; Spencer, M.W. and Irvin, A.H. "Staff Perceptions of the Work Environment: A Foundation for Improvement"., Society for College and University Planning Conference. July, 1994, San Francisco, CA.

Spencer, M.G.; Julia, J.B.; and Sossen, P. "Assessing the Culture for Quality Improvement: Understanding Staff Perceptions of Their Work Environment". American Association for Higher Education Assessment and Quality Conference. June 1994. Washington, DC.

Spencer, M.G. and Peterson, M.W. "Non-Instructional Staff Perceptions of a Quality-Oriented Work Environment." Association for Institutional Research Forum. May, 1995, Boston, MA.

Spencer, M.G.; Peterson, M.W.; and Cameron, K.S. "The Impact of Individual and Unit Characteristics on Perceptions of the Culture and Climate of Continuous Quality Improvement". American Educational Research Association Conference. April, 1995, San Francisco, CA.

Related Dissertations:

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Irvin, A.H. Leadership Strategies for the Implementation of Total Quality Management at Five Research Universities. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI. 1995.

Spencer, M.G. Non-Instructional Staff Perceptions of a Quality-Oriented Work Environment. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Michigan. In progress.

Winn, B.A. Organizational Quality in Higher Education: An Assessment of the Baldridge Framework in the University Work Environment. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI. 1995.

TABLE 1. CONTRASTING ACADEMIC AND MANAGEMENT RESEARCH WITH A COLLABORATIVE ACTION APPROACH

Research Characteristic	Academic/Scholarly	Management Oriented I.R.	Collaborative Action
Purpose of Research (Researcher Motive)	Develop new concepts/theories Test existing ones	Clarify problems, develop alternatives, seek solutions	Mutual learning by researcher and institutional participants
Primary Audience	Academic & researcher community/profession	Decision makers or key constituents	Both potentially
Source of Problem Definition	Literature, knowledge gaps researcher interest	Institutional problems or decision making priority	Link institutional issue and academic knowledge
Time Frame	Research or researcher determined	Institutional priority or decision cycle	Institution primary, researcher flexible
Role of Researcher	Neutral, detached expert	Management analyst, consultant	Partners, change agents
Research Control	Researcher	Situation determined	Primarily situation
Design	Theory based, field design	Situation based	Combination
Role of Subject	Respondent or subject	Limited research particiption	Mutual partner
Nature of Findings	Conceptual or theoretical contribution Research report to client	Problem clarified, alternatives and action plan Policy report/recommendations	Accommodate both
Dissemination	Report and publications academic community	Institutional constituents and decision makers	Both potentially
Interpretation and Action Plan	Very limited interest of researcher	Primary concern of policy makers	Feedback, informed dialogues, and group action planning
Source of Reward	Research publication and presentations	Constituent acceptance, successful implementation, model for others	Both types viewed as legitimate
Focus of Benefits	Primarily to researcher	Usefulness to institution or decision makers	Potentially both

FIGURE 1: COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH:

A STRATEGY FOR FACULTY INVOLVEMENT IN INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

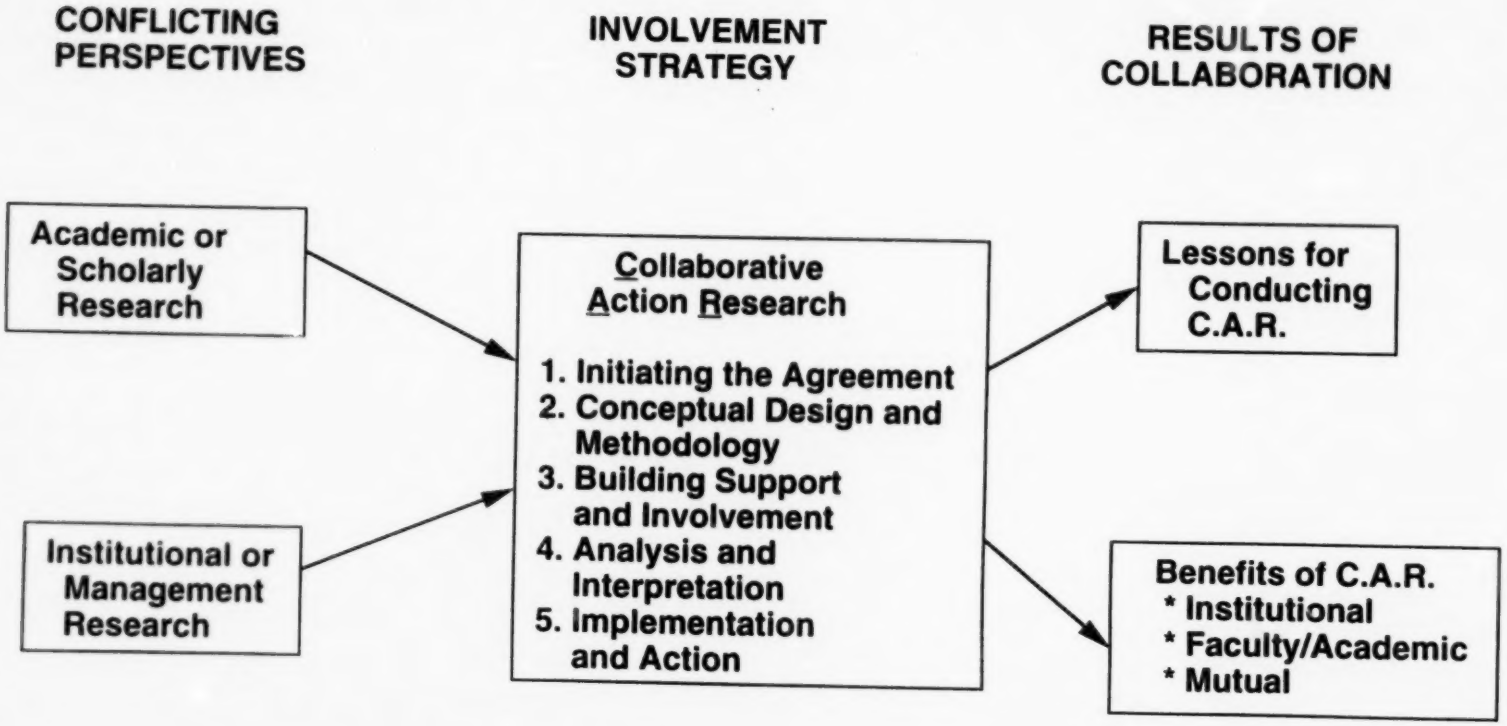

FIGURE 2

The M-Quality Framework

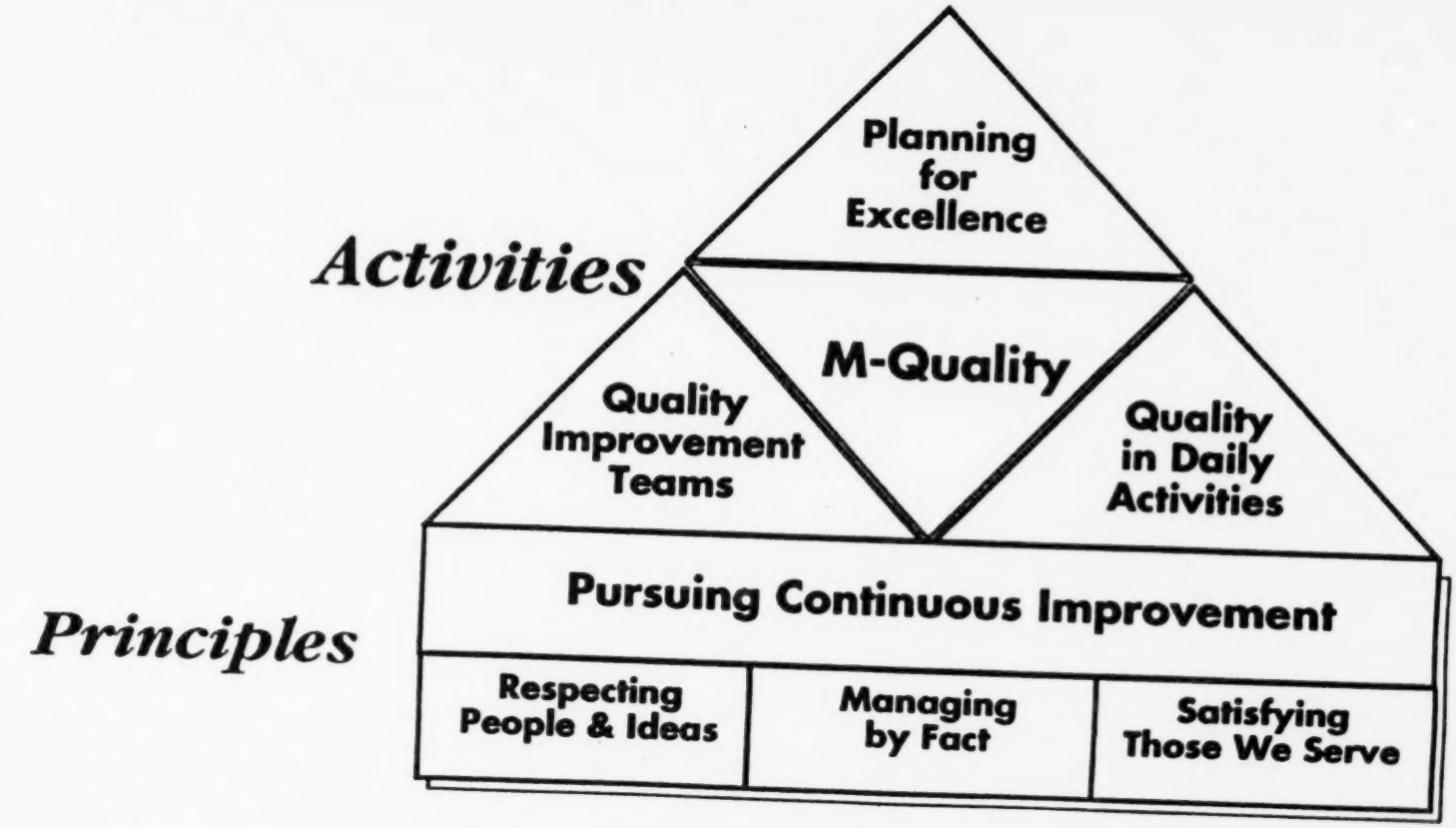

FIGURE 3

The Organization of M-Quality